IN THE ABSTRACT:

Page 27, please change the ABSTRACT to read as follows:

--A device and method which enables several users to send messages, such as images, which can be verified by the receiving party. Each user has an external device in which the user's secret key information is stored. This secret key information is input together with information to be transmitted; and the receiver can, by using the user's public key, can be assured of the authenticity of the information.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (amended) In an information input device, the combination of:

a) means for inputting first information;

b) means for storing secret key information which is fed from an external device;

and

c) means for generating a digital signature based upon the first information and the secret key information.

Please amend claim 6 as follows:

6. (amended) An information input device comprising:

a) means for inputting first information;

b) means for compressing said first information;

c) means for storing secret information which is fed from an external device; and

d[c]) means for generating a distinguishing information based on the secret information and the information compressed by said compressing means,

wherein said external device stores said secret key corresponding to a registered user.

Claim 8, line 2, change "caries" to --carries--.

Please amend claim 10 as follows:

10. (amended) An image input apparatus comprising:

a) an image input device for inputting said image data;

a memory for storing secret information which is fed from an external device; and

- 3 -

c) an operation device for carrying out an operation using the image data and the secret information.

Claim 11, line 2, delete "means for generating caries" and insert --operation device carries--.

Please amend claim 14 as follows:

14. (amended) An image input system comprising:

a) a first terminal device for inputting image data;

b) a second terminal device for having a memory for storing secret information which corresponds to a user; and

c) an operator for executing a command based on an algorithm for generating a digital signature by using the image data and the secret information.

Please cancel claims 21-25.

Please add the following new claims 26 and 27:

--26.   An information input method comprising:

a) a step of inputting first information;

b) a step of storing secret key information which is fed from an external device; and